



Minutes City Council's Quality of Life Committee November 19, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Quality of Life Committee held on Thursday, November 19, 2009, 4:00 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Mayor Hugh Hallman

Councilmember Mark Mitchell

Councilmember Ben Arredondo

Councilmember Joel Navarro

City Staff Present:

Jan Hort, City Clerk

Lisa Collins, Dev Svcs

John Rush, PD

Rosa Inchausti, Diversity

Cliff Jones, Fire Dept

Chris Anaradian, Dev Svcs

Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Svcs

Micah Miranda, Economic Dev

Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Admin

Shelley Hearn, Community Relations

John Osgood, Pub Wks

Phil Falcosky, Tax & Audit

Glenn Kephart, Pub Wrks

Jeff Tamulevich, Dev Svcs

Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec

Guests Present:

Ixchel del Castillo

Amanda Roberson

Nick Catira

Stephanie Salazar

Mayor Hallman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances/Call to the Public

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Minutes of September 10, 2009

Councilmember Arredondo made a motion for approval of the minutes from September 10, 2009. Second by Councilmember Mitchell. Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3 – Barrios Bellos

Amanda Roberson stated that in 2007 the Valley Toyota Dealers Association partnered with Chicanos Por La Causa to create the Barrios Bellos Program. Barrios Bellos is a beautification and clean-up program aimed at restoring the safety and beauty of deteriorating Hispanic neighborhoods. Trash and debris removal, painting over graffiti, and landscaping are an example of some of the activities that this program would like to contribute to the Tempe community. Program organizers are proposing to bring this program to Victory Acres on January 23, with a particular focus on the St. Margaret Church.

Councilmember Mitchell suggested that Ms. Roberson work with media relations staff and Tempe Community Council representatives to promote this program and to recruit volunteers.

Councilmember Navarro arrived at 4:15.

Mayor Hallman mentioned the Habitat for Humanity activities that have helped to rejuvenate this historical neighborhood and programs such as Barrios Bellos are a welcomed addition to the Tempe community. Mayor Hallman encouraged Barrios Bellos to also consider looking at the Escalante neighborhood and how this program fits in with their needs.

Councilmember Arredondo suggested that city staff leverage this opportunity by promoting the partnership between Chicanos Por La Causa, Toyota and the City of Tempe.

Agenda Item 4 – Interdepartmental Work Group Update

Shauna Warner gave an update on the initial phases of the interdepartmental work group project that focused on the areas bordered by Scottsdale Road to College and Continental to Weber. This area was chosen because of the number of nuisance code violations and police calls for service. This area is comprised of approximately 1,400 homes, including some multi-family units. A survey has been conducted, with a 21% response rate.

Public outreach efforts were used to obtain neighborhood involvement. On Saturday, November 21, there will be a neighborhood clean up. Dumpsters will be set up throughout the neighborhood. Philly's will be allowing the City and volunteers the use of their parking lot. There will be representatives from Fire, Police, ERIC – recycling information center will be on-site. Staff will be following up with residents in January to provide asset building tools and conducting a post survey.

Councilmember Navarro commended staff their approach in conducting surveys and following up with these residents regarding their specific concerns. Mayor Hallman agreed that the survey results were revealing and stated that it would be helpful to get more specific Orbit transit ridership data, so that can be taken into consideration when budget discussions resume. There is a distinction between 'choice' riders that have alternative means of transportation and patrons that use the Orbit as their primary source of transit. Shelley Hearn volunteered to get input from transportation staff to find out what types of survey questions would help to elicit more useful ridership data when surveys of this nature are conducted.

Agenda Item 5 – Neighborhood Commercial Centers Update

Micah Miranda stated that there is a 10.3% commercial center rental vacancy rate in Tempe. Staff has been meeting with representatives from these neighborhood centers to find out what would entice tenancy. Much of that feedback has been the need for tenant improvements, including exteriors of buildings and commercial center properties. An additional 25% drop in tenancy is anticipated.

Mayor Hallman commented that there are many appeals being lodged with the county assessor to dispute inflated property evaluations, which increases taxes for landlords. Vacant commercial properties have an adverse impact on rental sales taxes collected in Tempe.

Agenda Item 6 – Rental Housing License Update

Phil Falcosky stated that the Tax and License Division is responsible for licensing landlords of rental properties in Tempe. A database of these properties is public information and available on the Tempe website. A Rental Housing Specialist monitors rental housing/tax reporting. The estimated impact of licensing all residential rental properties is over \$700,000. Mayor Hallman suggested that staff identify landlords that own multiple properties so that trends could be identified in terms of ownership, nuisance calls, etc.

Discussion ensued regarding how unlicensed landlords are contacted by the City and at what point Code Enforcement is notified of unlicensed landlords, who can be fined \$1,000 by the City for conducting this activity without have a privilege sales tax license.

Direction: Staff was asked to improve notification to unlicensed landlords in conjunction with Code Enforcement staff to ensure that landlords that are not properly licensed are fined, with the ultimate goal of getting them to comply with the law.

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

None.

Agenda Item 8 - Announcements

The next meeting will be held on January 21, 2010.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Prepared by: Kay Savard

Reviewed by: Shauna Warner

Jan Hort
City Clerk